

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 185413  
ORIGIN NEA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 185413

STADIS/////////  
FOR AMBASSADOR FROM NEA/ARN DRAPER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINT, LE, US

SUBJECT: LEBANESE MILITARY PROGRAMS

1. THERE ARE TWO NEW DEVELOPMENTS WHICH COULD MAKE OUR  
COMMON TASKS MORE DIFFICULT. FIRST IS THE FY 1978 SUPPLE-  
MENTAL OF 50 MILLION IN FMS CREDITS. YOU WILL RECALL THAT  
WE AGREED THIS FY 78 SUPPLEMENTAL WOULD BE HANDLED AND  
DEBATED AS A DE FACTO PART OF THE FY 79 AUTHORIZATION RPT  
AUTHORIZATION ROUTE, IN ORDER TO SAVE EXTRA HOUSE HEARINGS,  
ETC. ON THE APPROPRIATIONS SIDE, HOWEVER, IT HAS BEEN  
TREATED AS A FY 78 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION REQUIRING  
SEPARATE ACTION IN CONGRESS. THE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROP. WAS  
DELAYED BECAUSE THE FY 79 SECURITY ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZATION  
HAS BEEN DELAYED. IT IS HARD TO SAY WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT  
BUT WE MAY FACE AN IMPOSSIBLE TIME SQUEEZE. THE FULL  
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AUTHORIZATION MAY NOT BE VOTED ON UNTIL SOME TIME IN  
AUGUST AND THEN WILL FACE A HOUSE-SENATE CONFERENCE. WE  
MUST SIGN AN FY 78 CREDIT AGREEMENT WITH LEBANON BEFORE THE  
END OF THE FY 78 FISCAL YEAR. I COULD FORESEE PROBLEMS  
IF WE HAD ONLY A FEW DAYS TO GET A LEBANESE SIGNATURE,  
RECALLING THAT THEY HAVE BUREAUCRATIC DIFFICULTIES IN  
DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO SIGN TO SOMEONE OTHER THAN KHOURY

OR BOUTROS.

2. I AM THEREFORE CONSULTING ABOUT A FALL-BACK ARRANGEMENT, POSSIBLY RPT POSSIBLY GOING FOR AN FY 79 RPT 79 SUPPLEMENTAL. OF IMPORTANCE TO YOUR POSITION, HOWEVER, IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE LEBANESE--WITH THEIR ABILITY TO READ MORE INTO A SITUATION THAN IT WARRANTS--WILL INTERPRET THE PRESENT DEVELOPMENT, IF THEY HEAR ABOUT IT, AS A SIGNAL OF NO U.S. CONFIDENCE IN THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT. I HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH REGULARLY WITH APPROPRIATION COMMITTEE STAFFERS, ASSURING THEM THAT WE HAD TO AVOID AN IMPLIED SIGNAL OR NO-CONFIDENCE VOTE, BUT THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD THE U.S. SEND ANY MORE EQUIPMENT UNDER THIS SUPPLEMENTAL UNTIL WE WERE SURE THE SITUATION HAD SETTLED DOWN AND WE WERE SURE THERE WOULD BE NO DISINTEGRATION OF THE ARMY. THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT CAUGHT US BY SURPRISE AND, IF IT COMES UP IN YOUR TALKS, YOU COULD STATE WITH ASSURANCE IT IS SIMPLY A PROCEDURAL PROBLEM, THAT THE U.S. STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT AND A NATIONAL ARMY, ETC.

3. THE OTHER DEVELOPMENT IS THAT COL. ANTOINE BARAKAT HAS JUST BEEN ASSIGNED TO WASHINGTON, AND MAY ALREADY BE IN CANADA VISITING RELATIVES. HE WILL HAVE THE SAME MISSION AS CAPT. NEHME IN FACILITATING THE MILITARY  
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ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING PROGRAMS WITH THE U.S. NEHME IS TO STAY IN WASHINGTON AND ASSIST BARAKAT, BUT WE ARE AFRAID THAT THE CONTROVERSIAL BARAKAT WILL BE HIGHLY VISIBLE AND WILL CAUSE GREAT MISUNDERSTANDING AS TO THE U.S. POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE SYRIANS, THE MUSLIM ELEMENTS OF LEBANON'S ARMY, AD INFINITUM. WE HOPE THAT THIS IS BASICALLY A MOVE TO GET BARAKAT OUT OF THE COUNTRY TO SOME QUIET PLACE FOR A YEAR OR SO, AND WE CAN SYMPATHIZE WITH THE GOL'S PROBLEM IN THIS SITUATION, BUT WE ARE AFRAID THEY MAY HAVE CREATED AN EVEN GREATER PROBLEM. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS AND ANY BACKGROUND YOU MAY HAVE. ALSO, IS THERE ANY WAY BOUTROS AND COMPANY COULD TAKE STEPS TO MAKE SURE BARAKAT'S VISIBILITY HERE CAN BE REDUCED TO THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM. VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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